Mr. *Woodward*'s Sermon at St. *Mary-le-Bow*, *Decemb.* 28. 1696. Before the SOCIETIES for *Reformation of Manners*:

1.

THE
DUTY of Compassion
to the Souls of others,
In endeavouring their *Reformation*.

Being the Subject of a

SERMON

Preached *December* the 28*th* 1696.

At St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

Before the Societies for *Reformation of Manners* in the CITY of *LONDON*.

Published at their Request.

By *JOSIAH WOODWARD*
Minister of *Popler*.

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TO THE SOCIETIES FOR *Reformation* of *Manners* In the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter.*

IT *is a Divine and Bleſſed Work,* my Honoured Brethren! *to which you have ſo heartily and effectually applied your ſelves. And may the God*

of Heaven and Earth proſper your Handy-work, *or rather, his own Work in your Hands.*

The Reformation *of wicked People is ever very requiſite, but in the preſent height of our Impieties it is not only ſeaſonable, but of* abſolute Neceſſity *to be done without Delay; leſt our* Iniquity, *which has viſibly been our* languiſhing Diſtemper, *ſhould ſpeedily become our* utter Ruin; *which ſhews the Unreaſonableneſs of ſuch who call your* Zeal *an unſeaſonable Heat.*

And as far are they from Truth, who call it a medling with things which do not belong unto you; ſince God *makes it your bounden Duty in that Text which is the Subject of the following Diſcourſe. And as little Reaſon have they to call it* Cruelty, *ſince God there calls it* Charity, *and aſſures us that the contrary is* Hatred in the very Heart. *So that my Text is both your* Commiſſion *and* Vindication.

dication. *And truly, it is your Plea of furthering this your* excellent Deſign *by the publication of this Sermon, which alone induces me to conſent to it. For I know no greater Good that can poſſibly come upon this corrupt World, than its* Reformation; *yea, I do not ſee how any Good can come unto it, or abide with it, without this. And this is indeed a direct way to prevent not only the Calamities of* Kingdoms, *but the Eternal Miſeries of* Humane Souls.

And therefore it cannot but be matter of great Joy to all good People to hear of your ſucceſsful Progreſs in this your pious Enterprize. *What exalted Praiſes will they offer to God, when they hear of your Order, Courage, and Unanimity in a Work of ſuch abſolute Neceſſity; and when they underſtand that* Thouſands *have been brought by your means to legal Puniſhment, for their abominable Enormities; and that Mul-*

titudes of ſcandalous Houſes, which were the odious Nurſeries of Uncleanneſs, *have been ſuppreſs'd by you; and that* publick Vice and Profaneneſs *is manifeſtly check'd, and in a way to be rooted out by your exemplary Diligence, Zeal, and Expence in this great Undertaking? As it is more particularly related in an* Account of the Riſe and Progreſs of the Religious Societies of Young Men, *lately publiſhed.*

It was indeed impoſſible that an Affair of this general and important Nature could have been carried on with any probability of Succeſs, but by the conjoined Prudence, Power, and Coſt of an Aſſociated Body *of conſiderable Perſons. And bleſſed be God who inclined the Hearts of ſo many of you to unite together in an Affair of ſuch difficult and diſcouraging Circumſtances; and that he hath guided your Motions in it with ſuch irreproachable Juſtice and Prudence.*

For

For your Method of Procedure againſt Offenders is ſo ſtrictly Legal, and your Rules of Management ſo Prudential, that you have not only drawn many to incorporate with your Societies, *but have very much ſilenced the Calumnies of all but* vicious *and* unreaſonable People *againſt them.*

So that when your noble Deſign, your juſt Proceedings, and your conſiderable Succeſs comes to appear to the World in a true Light, it cannot reaſonably be queſtioned, but that you'll gain all the Honourable and Sober *part of it (by the pure worth of your Cauſe) to pray for you, ſupport, and vindicate you, according to their* Place *and* Power.

For, how can the Magiſtrate, *who would be thought Righteous in his* Place, *or faithful to the Vows of his* Religion, *or to the Oath of his* Office; *in the leaſt*

leaſt decline his Aſſiſtance to that which ſo manifeſtly aſſerts the Authority of God *over Men, and ſo directly ſutes the very End for which* Magiſtracy *was ordained in the World?*

And will not every Miniſter *of the* Goſpel of Chriſt *depart from his* Sacred Character, *yea, revolt from his* Lord *and* Maſter, *if he be wanting to aſſiſt you in any thing proper to his Function?*

Yea, every private Perſon who hath or deſireth to have a clear *and* comfortable Conſcience, *or has but a juſt Senſe of* Moral Decency, *and of* Civil Government, *will find himſelf in Duty and Intereſt obliged to join with you, in a ſeaſonable informing againſt Vice, and endeavouring to ſuppreſs thoſe intolerable Impieties which have ſo long been a Reproach to our* Religion *and* Government.

So that Peoples agreeing with you, or being againſt you in this your Undertaking (*which all the Senſe of Mankind muſt pronounce* Pious *and* Juſt) *will be a ſort of a Teſt to diſcern* Religious *and* Vertuous Minds *from others: In which, I pray God, none be diſtinguiſht to their Reproach here, and Condemnation hereafter.*

But as our Bleſſed Lord *himſelf was injured, reviled, and oppoſed when upon Earth: So, you muſt expect (yea, I know, you have experienced) the injurious Treatment of a* ſinful and perverſe Generation. *But here you are to tread in the Steps of your* Saviour *in his Sufferings, as well as in his Doings: And with him, pray, That ſuch may be* forgiven by a Merciful God, who do they know not what againſt him. *And whilſt you bring poor ſenſeleſs Sinners to undergo the juſt Penalties of the Laws, let your Prayers follow*

low them, that it may indeed be an effectual Method of their Reformation.

But there is one Great Thing wanting yet to accompliſh this deſired Amendment of wicked People, *(the want of which I have heard ſome of you lament) which is,* A due Proviſion of Work and Work-houſes to imploy the Hands of the Poor, *which otherwiſe will moſt certainly be miſimployed in ſinful and vicious Courſes.*

If we ask any Thief, Strumpet, or other Malefactor; What it was that brought them to their wicked way of Life? *They uſually reply, That it was their want of an honeſt Employment, and that they did it* to get Bread. *And 'tis very probable that they ſpeak the Truth: For had they been bred up to* diligent Labour, *and been inured to* Buſineſs, *it is very likely, that neither the Devil nor their*

Luſts

Luſts had ever gotten ſuch Dominion over them.

Nor indeed is there any probability of reclaiming them, but by ſuch means as theſe. Were every Malefactor *who is ſent to the Priſon, kept there ſtrictly to the utmoſt bodily Labour that they are capable of, and this for a competent Time: And had they withal, the Benefit of frequent Prayers and Sermons ſutable to their Condition: This would make their Priſon a proper* Houſe of Correction *and* Inſtruction *too. And when they had once found the Benefit and Comfort of honeſt Labour and a good Conſcience, it might be hoped that moſt of them would never return back again to their former courſe of Life. Whereas now, if a Felon be ſent to the Jail, he there finds the moſt* inveterate Villains *in the whole County for his Companions and Tutors, and he has leaſure in abundance to con over their Leſſons, ſo that he becomes* ſeven-fold more

more a Child of Hell *than before, if he eſcapes the Gallows. Or if a Slut be ſent to* Bridewell, *and be there ſeverely laſht, and then ſet free again: 'tis true, ſhe comes out corrected, but not at all amended; for ſtill the firſt Cauſe of her Misbehaviour continues; and if want of Imployment brought her to her former ill Life, it will be like to reduce her to it again. And thus they harden in their Vices, and the Keepers of thoſe Priſons find them their conſtant Viſitants.*

And, alas! what pity is it? And what a ſhame in truth to ſuch a Wealthy City and Nation! *Yea, what a Reproach to the Faith and Charity of* Chriſtians, *that due Proviſion is not made to imploy the Poor? For want of which, not only our Priſons and Houſes of Correction, but our very Alms-houſes ſeldom anſwer the End of their Foundation.*

And

And therefore it would be one of the beſt Charities *in the World, if a competent Number of* Gentlemen *and* Wealthy Citizens, *expert in Manufacture, would endeavour to obtain an Act of Parliament in this behalf; and in the mean time contribute to a common Stock, and employ it to this End. And it would become every Perſon of Ability to contribute towards it, either by giving ſomething to the Fund, or taking the Goods thus wrought from off their Hands that out of Charity imploy the Poor.*

It can ſcarcely be imagined, that People could better ſerve their Generation than in this Method, or more adminiſter to the Glory of God and the common Benefit of Men. For who can ſum up the Advantages that would accrue to any State *by the ceaſing of the Vices of ſuch multitudes of People, and the Income of their Labours? And if this were generally encouraged, the Wealth a-*

riſing

riſing from it in time, would probably be a viſible Reward of the Charity of it in this World; as it has been demonſtrated by ſeveral Ingenious Pens.

The good God vouchſafe to proſper all neceſſary Means of a General Reformation of Manners *amongſt us, that we may appear (from the higheſt to the loweſt) worthy of the glorious Name of a* Reformed People. *Which is the earneſt deſire of,*

Gentlemen,

Your aſſured Friend and Servant,

J. W.

Errat.] Pag. 23. lin. 11. read *Harveſt.*

The Duty of Compaſſion to the Souls of Others.

LEVIT. XIX. 17.

Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.

IN the Rage of a devouring Peſtilence, it is the Care of every wiſe *Government* to ſhut up the Perſons infected, and to make a Mark over their Door, that all People may ſhun them, to prevent the ſpreading of the Contagion; yet with a juſt Compaſſion to the poor People who lie under the dreadful Diſtem-

per, and a diligent uſe of Means for their Recovery.

And if our *Faith* had as quick and effectual Apprehenſions as our *Senſes*, we ſhould be as much concerned to prevent the pernicious growth of Sin, which is certainly the greateſt Plague to *Cities* and *Kingdoms*, as well as to Families and particular Perſons. It has been the deſtruction of one World already, and the groſs and general overflowing of it is at this Day a pregnant Symptom of the approaching Ruin of the other.

A publick Sinner does not only ſin againſt his *own Soul*, but againſt the *Community* of which he is a Member; yea, againſt the World in which he lives. The Miſchiefs which attend his Sin are general, and ſpread widely and univerſally. For hereby the *Governour of the World* is diſhonoured and provoked, and the *common Father* of Mankind is diſowned and defied. So that there is no Perſon but is concerned to hinder and prevent the Sin

of

of another; and upon the view of any ſuch Tranſgreſſion, he has juſt cauſe of Offence and Reſentment given him: and therefore he does at once hate both his *Brother's Soul,* and his own, if he quietly connives at it, and tamely paſſes it by; which is directly contrary to the Law of God in the Text, *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart; thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.*

In which words, the *Holy and Righteous God* binds this Duty upon the Conſciences, not only of *Miniſters* and *Magiſtrates,* but of every Man, *That he maintain a vigilant and conſtant Concern for his Brother's Soul and Salvation.* Next to our own Welfare, we are to have a kind and charitable Concern for our Brother's. *Our Brother*; that is, every Perſon who having the ſame Nature, and deriving it from the ſame God, is a Brother as to all points of Duty required by the common Lord of all.

And therefore theſe words are an authentick Ground for this Point of Doctrine,

Obſerv. That there is a great want of Charity to the Souls of others, in thoſe who make no Attempts to reſcue them from the Power of any known Sin. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke him:* As if it were ſaid, you may in your Lips, and in your other Carriage pretend what Kindneſs you will to others, but if you induce them to ſin, or indulge them in it, all your glavering Profeſſions of Friendſhip are mere ſham and paint; yea they are real enmity and hatred, an Artifice to ſubvert and deſtroy them for ever. Like the *Tyrant's Engine* (mentioned by Sir *W. Rawleigh*) which was compoſed in the ſhape of a beautiful Woman, and contrived with that exquiſite Art, that it would riſe up and embrace any Perſon before whom it was placed, and at the ſame time

ſtab

ſtab them with a Multitude of mortal Wounds when it graſp'd them in its Iron-arms. And truly the Embraces of ſinful Companions are alike fatal; it is the twiſting of the *old Serpent* about them, full of Venom and deadly Poiſon. It is *Hatred in the Heart*, ſays the Text, if *you rebuke not your ſinful Brother*, but negligently *ſuffer ſin* to lie *upon him*, and ſink him into the pit of Perdition.

So that we have here three parts of *ſpiritual Charity* recommended to us. And theſe are enforc'd and preſs'd upon us by three *conſiderable Motives*: And my ſpeaking to each of theſe will be the proper Method to open and apply the Duty of the Text.

I begin to conſider the threefold *ſpiritual Charity* injoined in the Text: The firſt of which is,

I. A vigorous deſire of the Happineſs of our Brother's Soul.—*Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart.* The poſitive Injunction impli'd in this

Expreſſion is, " Thou ſhalt bear an in-
" ward and hearty Affection to thy
" *Brother* (that is, to every humane
" Creature) and thou ſhalt eſpecially
" love his Soul, and do whatever thy
" Place and Capacity enables thee to-
" wards his Eternal Salvation.

And indeed a *real Chriſtian* cannot do otherwiſe; the *Spirit of Chriſt* will conſtrain him to it. For, if we have not ſo much of the *ſpiritual Zeal* and *Temper* of Chriſt, as to ſeek the *Glory of God*, and the *Salvation of Men*, *We are none of his.* A worldly, carnal, and unchriſtian Spirit ſways that degenerate Soul, *who ſeeks his own, and not his Brother's Good.* Yea, ſuch a one gives a very ſhrewd Suſpicion, that he does not heartily ſeek his own *Spiritual and Eternal Welfare:* For he that knows and feels the due import of thoſe two words, *Eternal Salvation*, and conceives ſomething of thoſe innumerable, exquiſite, and endleſs Woes, which are ſumm'd up in that one word *Damnation*, will

be

be ſenſibly moved to pity ſuch as he ſees paſſing on directly towards the pit of Deſtruction. He will beg his *Brother* by all the Entreaties he can uſe, that he would not *reſiſt his own Mercies*, nor *deſtroy a Soul for which Chriſt died*: Yea, he will uſe a ſort of Violence with him (if there be any in the *Perſwaſives*, *Rebukes*, and *Remonſtrances of Love*) to reſtrain him from Self-deſtruction, and to bar up his Way to everlaſting Torment.

And this *Chriſtian Affection* to our *Brother* muſt not end here; namely, in a pious Exhortation and Admonition only. But it is further required in the Text,

II. That our Love to Men be exerciſed in a ſeaſonable (and if need be, in a ſharp and ſevere) Reproof of an offending Brother. This is comprehended in the word *Rebuke*.—*Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour.* "Thou ſhalt not be di-

" verted from this good Office in
" any wiſe. Thou ſhalt not fear his
" Anger, nor the World's Cenſures,
" nor any Temporal Damage which
" may come to thee by ſo doing.
" Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy
" *Neighbour* when he gives thee cauſe
" to do it. *Thy Neighbour*, that is,
" He with whom thou converſeſt,
" for he is for that time thy Neigh-
" bour.

But here we muſt obſerve the Limits of a few *Cautions*.

(1.) Our Reproof of our Neighbour muſt be managed in a Method ſutable to his Station, and our Relation to him. *An Elder* (ſays the Apoſtle) *is not to be rebuked, but entreated as a Father*, 1 Tim. 5. 1. Which implies, that the *natural Father* is likewiſe to be treated with the ſame Reſpect; not inſulting over his Nakedneſs, but pitying his Infirmities. And *Elihu* wiſely obſerved, *That it is not fit for every one to go bluntly*

bluntly to a King, and tell him that he is wicked, or to ſay to Princes that they are ungodly, Job 34. 18.

We ſee with what Reſpect and humble Addreſs, the Perſons who accompanied *Naaman*, corrected his Paſſion. The Men were grieved at their Maſter's raſh Reſentment of the *Prophet's* Meſſage, and were unwilling that he ſhould turn away without a Cure of his Leproſy: whereupon (it is ſaid) that they came near and ſpake unto him, and ſaid, *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he ſaith to thee, Waſh and be clean?* 2 King. 5. 13. And we find, that this kind and gentle Application to him won upon him effectually; their forcible Argument convinces his Judgment, and their humble Reſpect ſoftens his Heart to embrace it; and ſo it came to a deſired Effect, to the Cure of the Diſorder of his Soul firſt, and then to the Cure of the Diſtemper of his Body.

And

And indeed the prudent Management of this Affair is the taking the Inſtrument by the right Handle, and ſo the moſt likely way to the deſired Succeſs; which introduces a ſecond *Caution*, namely,

(2.) That in the caſe of *rebuking* any Perſon, we ſhould take care to *time* it well. The *proper Seaſon* is very material in the Adminiſtration of this *ſpiritual Phyſick*. The *Phyſicians* of our Bodies decline the giving of a Doſe, tho never ſo excellent, in the Extremity of the Paroxiſm. And truly a Perſon in a *Paſſion*, or in *Drink*, or the like, muſt have time for the Height of his Fit to ſink, that he may come to the Uſe of his Reaſon, before his Cure can be attempted with any Probability of Succeſs.

Had *Abigail* reproved *Nabal* when he was *very drunk*, and in a violent *Paſſion*, as it ſeems he was when he ſent that railing Meſſage to King *David*, it is very probable that her ſelf might have had the ſecond Part of the ſame

ſame *Outrage*, as the only Effect of her Reproof, and Reward of her Pains: But ſhe did more wiſely; *She ſaid nothing to him more or leſs till the Morning-light*; but then, *when the Wine was gone out of* Nabal, ſhe lays open all the Parts of his deſperate Folly and Rudeneſs before him; and applies it ſo home to him, *that his Heart died within him*, 1 Sam. 25. 36, *&c.*

So that the *prudent Timing* of our *Rebukes* is very conducible to their taking place upon the Perſon to whom they are applied. But then we muſt beware, on the other hand, that our *convenient Seaſon* be not like that of *Fælix*, a mere trick to ſhun the Duty, never thinking of it more. It is of the two, better to miſtake the Time of a Duty, than wholly to omit the Performance of it. Again,

(3.) We muſt not underſtand the Words of the Text ſo as to countenance the *Popiſh Cruelties* for their own Superſtitions. It is true, we muſt not *ſuffer Sin upon our Brother or Neigh-*

Neighbour; and rather than let him alone to periſh in his Vices, we may and ought to deliver him up to the *Civil Magiſtrate*, that the Delinquent may ſuffer the light Inflictions of legal Puniſhment here, in hope that he may be awakened by theſe, to ſhun that everlaſtiug Anguiſh which will inevitably come upon him, *if he goes on in his Iniquity*.

But then, it muſt be a Tranſgreſſion of the *moral Law*, or ſome Sin againſt the *plain Revelation of God's Will:* in which caſe the Offender's Conſcience (if he has any) will applaud both the Evidence againſt him, and the Judg who decrees his Puniſhment: for his own Heart will be both an impartial *Evidence* and *Avenger* againſt him, whenever he comes to himſelf.

But as for the bloody Methods of the *Romiſh Inquiſition*, where innocent Perſons are tortured, rack'd and burnt, becauſe they will not pollute their Faith and Conſciences by things

of

of Man's Invention, and by Doctrines not only beſide, but againſt the *expreſs Will of God:* The Voice of all good *Chriſtians*, yea of all *Mankind*, ſends forth a loud Cry to Heaven againſt them: And every body ſees, that the beating out of Peoples Brains is no good Means to bring any Perſwaſion into their Heads; and that thoſe of the *Trent-Council* ſpake rather after the tyrannical Temper of *Popery*, than according to the Rules of Argumentation, who were for *anſwering* Luther's *Books by Fire and Faggot apply'd to the Author.* This is a very inglorious Conqueſt, like *Herod*'s Victory over the poor Infants, of which this Day puts us in mind. But there is not the leaſt Affinity betwixt the inhumane Perſecution of good Men, and the *legal Puniſhment* of wicked ones. That is diametrically oppoſite to this, for that *cruſhes* the *beſt* of Men, this *chaſtiſes* the *worſt:* That puts Men out of the way of their Duty, this brings them into it: That *injures* the Conſcience, this

this *relieves* it: That locks up the Gate of *Heaven*, this puts a Bar in the Paſſage to *Hell*. And, in a word, that is uncommanded by God, yea it is forbidden by him; but this is the expreſs Will of God, which is the ſtrongeſt Argument in the World to enforce it upon every ſenſible Conſcience. And this leads me to the third Part of *ſpiritual Charity* in the Text: namely,

III. That we ought to uſe all lawful and ſutable Means to reclaim the open and obſtinate Tranſgreſſor; — *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer Sin upon him*, i. e. " Thou ſhalt diligently purſue all pro-
" per Means to *pull this Firebrand out*
" *of the Fire*. Thou ſhalt appeal to
" the *Miniſter*, and to the *Magiſtrate*;
" not againſt the Man, but againſt
" the Sin: Thou ſhalt *tell it the*
" *Church*, (Mat. 18. 17.) Thou ſhalt
" *inform the Bench* (the Seat of Ju-
" ſtice) of it, (*Deut.* 13. 8.) That all
" fit *ſpiritual Cenſures* and *temporal*

" *Cha-*

"*Chaſtiſements* may be applied to him " in time, that his Soul periſh not to " all Eternity.

And ſurely this cannot be diſagreeable to the Rules of natural Affection, or Chriſtian Charity, or humane Friendſhip, ſince the very *Parents* amongſt the Jews were to appeal to the Magiſtrates of their City, to *puniſh even with Death their Son who was a Drunkard, or a Glutton, and an ungovernable Rebel*; as we read *Deut.* 21. 19. And however ſevere this may ſeem to the Perſon who fell under this exemplary Puniſhment, it was certainly a Kindneſs to the Community; which muſt needs find that *good Order* and *ſober Behaviour* was maintained by this ſtrict Law; which was the Benefit propoſed in the Inſtitution of it, *viz. That all* Iſrael *might hear, and fear, and do no more any ſuch Wickedneſs*, (ver. 21.) And that ſuch good Laws as theſe might not prove uſeleſs, for want of due *Information* and *Proſecution*, it was a ſtanding

ing Rule and Statute in the *Jewiſh Government*, That in all great Enormities, ſuch as heard or ſaw the Fact were to be *Informers* and *Witneſſes* againſt the Offender, tho it were a Friend as dear as their own Soul, or a Brother of their own Blood: yea, they were to be the *Executioners* too; as we read, (*Deut.* 17. 7.) *The Hands of the Witneſſes ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People:* And this (it is ſaid) was the only way *to put away the Evil from among them.* So that in ſuch a Caſe where the Bowels of Nature, and the Endearments of Friendſhip begin to ſtruggle againſt the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and the publick Good, the Love and Fear of God muſt turn the Ballance, conſidering that our overlooking of any groſs Sin is a taking the Guilt of it into our own Boſom: yea, 'tis a ſpreading and diffuſing of the Curſes due unto it upon the Face of the whole *City* and *Nation* in which we dwell.

So

So that it is very manifeſt, That the due Miniſtration of *Juſtice* is abſolutely neceſſary to the Happineſs of any State, in order to *ſuppreſs Vice*, and *ſupport Vertue*; and ſo to procure the *Bleſſings*, and avert the *Judgments* of Almighty God, the Righteous Governour of the World.

Now, the Tribunal of Juſtice is ſeated on theſe two Pillars, *viz.* Firſt, Upon *due Information* againſt Offenders; Secondly, An *impartial Execution* of Juſtice upon them, according to the Proof of the Fact.

As to the firſt, *viz.* Information againſt the impudent and profligate Contemners of the Laws of God and Men. The deſire of God's Glory, and Mens Salvation may induce us to it; and the Love of Vertue, and the common Good, muſt needs enforce the Practice of it: Or however, the Laws of God ought to conſtrain us to it, and the Fear of God's Wrath ſhould awaken us to waſh our Hands from the Guilt of other Mens Sins. For you are un-

juſt to the Offender's Soul, and your own, and to the publick Good, if you neglect it.

And, as for the *vulgar Odium*, and the common Reproaches againſt ſuch *Informers*, they are vain and ſenſleſs, and are merely contrived by the lovers of Sin (and the inviſible Patron and Promoter of it) to be a Shelter and Subterfuge for *Vice and Profaneneſs*.

For every Body knows, that without *Legal Evidence*, there can be no *Legal Puniſhment*. And tho the *Magiſtrate* be the beſt in the World, yet if the Crime be not duly proved and teſtifi'd before him, Juſtice it ſelf will bind his *Hands*, and chain his *Sword*.

Had not the People who heard the *Blaſphemy and Curſes of the Son of* Shelomith, *gone and told* Moſes *of it*, Lev. 24. 11. the Wretch might have curſt on, and blaſphemed as long as his Breath would have ſerved him to do it. But they that heard him, did better; they went forthwith and informed the *Magiſtrate* of it, as they were in Duty bound;

bound; and ſo the Curſes of Man were ſtopt, and the Bleſſings of God procured.

And O! where is the love of God, or of Vertue, or of the Souls of Sinners, or of the Publick Good, if we are diſcouraged from ſo good and neceſſary a Work, by ſuch *unreaſonable Cavils* as are uſually made againſt it? Alas! what *Love of God* have they, who will not ſpeak a good word for him before the face of his Enemies? Or what *Courage* have they in the Cauſe of God, who cannot bear an ill word, or a Nick-name for his ſake? And what a poor and puſillanimous Soul is that who dares not be good in ill Company, or in evil Times?

Ah! what inſupportable Shame and Contempt will be poured out on thoſe at laſt, who are now *aſham'd of Chriſt and of his Doctrine!* How will they be able to ſtand before the great God? or to ſhew their Faces before his Holy Angels, thoſe zealous *Miniſters of his, who do his Pleaſure*; or before that *noble Army of Martyrs, who counted not their*

Lives dear when ever they might glorify God by ſuch a Sacrifice? Yea, who ſhed their Hearts Blood for the ſake of *Religion*, with greater Reſolution than many now ſpeak a few good words for it, either in *reproving of Vice*, or *informing againſt it.*

Let us, for Shame, awaken out of ſuch a tepid and torpid State. A brutiſh Stupidity is a ſhameful Reproach to a *Man*; and Spiritual Inſenſibleneſs is much more ſo to a *Chriſtian:* and therefore let every one that bears the Name of *Chriſt* be zealous and indefatigable in his Work, and couragious and undaunted in his Cauſe.

Do you ſee a Perſon ſo void of Reaſon, as well as Faith, as to profane the *ſacred Name of God* in vile and blaſphemous Language? *You muſt in any wiſe rebuke the Wretch*, and not only ſo, but deliver him up to the *Magiſtrate*, as the People did in the like Caſe, *Lev.*24.11. *They went and told* Moſes *of it.*

See you a Perſon ſo void of God's Fear, as to profane that *Day* which God hath

hath *bleſt and ſanctified?* Dare he expoſe his Wares on that Sacred Day, or follow his Sports or Vices? See that you *ſuffer not this Sin upon him*, but ſuppreſs it by all lawful Ways and Means. As pious *Nehemiah*, Neh. 13. 17. who not only *threatned and drove away ſuch as brought their Goods* to be ſold, but *contended with the Nobles of* Judah, who ſuffered it upon the Sabbath.

The ſame Care ſhould be taken to reform not only plain and down-right Drunkenneſs, but unſeaſonable and immoderate frequenting of *Publick Houſes*, which are not deſigned to cheriſh the Vices, but to ſupply the Neceſſities of Men.

And particular Care muſt always be taken to root out that naſty Sin, which above others deſerves the Name of *Uncleanneſs*; and to brand thoſe impudent People with publick Shame and Correction, who dare proclaim their Impudence in the very Streets, and before the Sun.

By theſe Sins a *Land is greatly defi-*

led, and the Wrath of God highly incenſed againſt it. And therefore it becomes every *Chriſtian* to ſet himſelf couragiouſly againſt them, and to rejoice in an Opportunity of doing ſuch a piece of Service to his great and good Maſter, as to bring them before the *Magiſtrate* to receive condign Puniſhment: That the World may ſee that there are ſome who dare be as bold and vigilant for the Honour of the Prince of Light, as ſome others are in the Service of the Prince of Darkneſs. And tho your Adverſaries will cry out of a *Beam in your own Eye*, we are ſure theſe are not *Motes* which you endeavour to pull out of theirs; nor can they with any Reaſon or Juſtice, apply thoſe words of our *Saviour* to you, *Mat.*7.5. unleſs they can prove you abundantly more guilty of that Sin for which they are puniſhed, than themſelves.

And as to the ſecond Point, which is neceſſary to ſupport our Religion, and the publick Good, namely, *The impartial Execution of Juſtice upon profane and licentious*

centious Perſons: This is the Magiſtrate's peculiar Province; and bleſſed be God, that (as we have good and excellent Laws againſt *Profaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, ſo) we have ſome *righteous Magiſtrates* who duly put them in Execution. The good God raiſe up more of theſe *Labourers*, to cut down this ripe and exuberant Vintage of Vice, the Fields of which are *grown even white unto Haveſt.*

O! what an Honourable and Divine thing is *Magiſtracy* duly exerted in its proper Acts! How venerable is that Perſon in the ſight of Angels and Men, who piouſly uſes that *Sword* wherewith the God of Juſtice *(to whom Vengeance belongeth)* has girded him withal! Ah! let none dare to *wear that Sword in vain*, leſt it be drawn at laſt forth againſt themſelves by the *Almighty God*, as *David* did *Goliath*'s, to the deſtruction of him that wore it.

Truly I here teſtify to you, that I know no other way for *Magiſtrates* to ſhun this, but by their preſent and im-

partial executing of *Juſtice upon Evil-doers*, and *ſupporting them that do well.* This is indeed a bleſſed Work, and will receive a glorious Reward at laſt from *God the Righteous Judg.*

It is ſo *God-like*, to diſtribute juſt Puniſhments to *ſuch as do Evil*, and to ſupport Religious and Vertuous Perſons; that *the Magiſtrate who does* it in the Integrity of his Heart, will find Favour with God, and Eſteem among Men. It is indeed more than a ſingle Good; there is a Conſtellation of Vertues and Advantages in it; it will glorify God, and credit our Religion; it will make our Publick Affairs Proſperous, and our Nation Happy. It will make the Name of ſuch a Magiſtrate truly Honourable, and his Conſcience ſerene: yea, 'twill make his Life Comfortable, his Death Hopeful, and his Eternity Bleſſed.

And to preſs this further, let us conſider the Motives expreſs'd or imply'd in the Text, which tend to fix Holy Purpoſes, of ſetting in good earneſt to this

this Duty, in every Perſon according to his Station and Capacity. And this will be the proper *Application* of what has been ſaid.

Motive 1. Let us therefore remember in the firſt place, That it is *Hatred to any one, not to rebuke him for his Fault.* For indeed it is the greateſt Declaration of God's Wrath towards a Sinner, that he expreſſes upon Earth, when he will no more reprove nor correct him for his Offences: As in that dreadful Expreſſion, Hoſ. 4. 17. *Ephraim is join'd to Idols, let him alone.* "Let him be "no more diſturbed, either by Re-"proof or Affliction, but let him "ſecurely perſiſt in his Sin, and "harden in it, and periſh. And can we be content that our Remiſneſs in our Duty to our *Brother's Soul*, ſhould draw on him theſe direful and eternal Plagues?

It is a part of the Law of *Nature*, as well as a Statute in *Iſrael*, *That*

That no Perſon hate his Brother in his Heart; but that he be very kind and compaſſionate towards him. We are to live by the mutual Kindneſs of each other; this is the end of our incorporating into *Societies*. And indeed, this is ſuggeſted to us in the Frame of *Nature*.

Our good and wiſe *Creator* has ſo ordered the ſtate of Humane Life, that no Perſon (of what Rank or Condition ſoever) can ſubſiſt without the Help and Aſſiſtance of others. We are born naked, deſtitute, and impotent, and ſhould not ſurvive our Birth many Hours, except ſome *Eye pitied* us, and did the common Offices of ſutable Miniſtration to us. And thus we live many Years by the Kindneſs and Charity of others; being in our Infancy not only unable to provide our own neceſſary Food and Raiment, but even incapable of feeding or dreſſing our ſelves, tho the Means of both be provided to our hands.

And

And when a Man comes to maturity of Years and Strength, he is abſolutely inſufficient to ſupply his own wants of himſelf, but muſt crave the helping Hands of many others, both as to the neceſſaries of his Soul and Body. And it has pleaſed the common Father of all Men, to give peculiar Accompliſhments to the various Individuals, ſutable to the Exigencies of the univerſal Kind. And the thing in which one Man excels, is providentially fitted to make up the Defects of the reſt, by Him *who diſtributeth to every one ſeverally as he will.*

And the Caſe is the very ſame, if we are conſidered as *Chriſtians.* We are often minded in the *Goſpel,* that we are *Members one of another,* and are to have the ſame Care of one anothers Welfare, as the Members in the Natural Body; where the leaſt part has its neceſſary Uſe, and the *greateſt cannot ſay to it, I have no need of you.* And this is one end of our *Bleſſed Saviour's*

our's uniting us in a *Church*, or *Chriſtian Society*; that we might be like *Stones in the ſame Building*, where each Stone ſupports, and is ſupported by ſome other, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. And in Truth we ſo often want, not only the Counſels, but the Rebukes of a faithful Friend, that theſe are ſometimes the greateſt Kindneſſes they can do us.

So then, every Excellency in Man, whether it be *Spiritual*, *Moral*, or *Political*, infuſed or acquired, is a *Talent* put into the Hands of that Perſon by the common Father of Men, to be imployed for the Good of the *Community*; like the Bulk of an Eſtate given to the eldeſt Son, for the good of the whole Family: Which is the firſt Conſideration proper to move Men to do good to the Souls of others, and to *rebuke* them upon Occaſion.

Motive 2. We are to remember our *near Relation* to every Man; He is *thy Brother*, ſays the Text, a ſharer in thy *Nature*, a partaker of thy *Blood*. And except

except the Bowels of Humane Nature are periſh'd in thee, thou canſt not but feel a painful Regret when thou beholdeſt one of thy own *Kind* going in the way of Deſtruction. Can you find in your Heart any tendency to verify that ſevere Reflection upon Human Cruelty which ſome have made, namely, that *one Man is many times a Wolf and a Fury to another?* This is a Carriage worſe than that of *Barbarians*; for they ſhew Kindneſs to the Miſerable, *Acts* 28. 2. Yea, it is worſe than the ſavage Brutes; for the fierceſt of them ſeldom prey upon their own Kind; and the very Swine run at the Cry of their Fellows to help and ſuccour them. Can Man then that was *made after the likeneſs of God*, be ſo much of a Devil to his Brother, as to indulge his Sin, and further his Courſe in the ways of Damnation? Surely, in ſuch Perſons, Righteouſneſs, Charity, Tenderneſs, and Humanity it ſelf is periſhed.

Motive 3. The *Text* further moves us to do all the good Offices of Piety one towards another that we can, by minding us, that he is our *Neighbour*. ——*Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour*. He is your near Aſſociate, his Lot is providentially caſt near unto you, that you might help and ſuccour him. Friendly Aſſiſtance among *Neighbours*, is a mutual Debt; and every one with whom we converſe, is for that time our *Neighbour*. We muſt therefore endeavour to put a ſtop to his Sin, in order to prevent his Ruin.

If you ſee your Neighbour's Houſe on Fire, all the Neighbourhood will cry ſhame upon you, if you get not out of your Bed, tho it be at Midnight, to help him quench the threatning Flames, that he be not ruined by them. And will you not be as vigilant to keep your *Neighbour* from falling into thoſe *Flames which can never be quenched?* If not, there is a deplorable Defect both in your *Faith* and in your *Charity*.

Upon

Upon the whole Matter; ſince God lays this *Duty of ſuppreſſing the ſcandalous Sins of Men upon every Perſon's Conſcience*, according to his Station and Capacity: Can any of us that have any ſenſibleneſs of Conſcience, evade the Charge and binding Force of it?

Will you (like *Gallio*) care for none of theſe things? Or will you lull your ſelves to ſleep with *Felix* his ſhifting excuſe, fancying that you may hereafter have *a more convenient Seaſon* to do it? Or will you turn ſhort with *churliſh Cain*; and even ask God to his Face, *Whether you are your Brother's Keeper?* Yes truly; God has ſo far made you the *Guardian of your Brother*, that if you ſee him about to cut his Throat, you muſt ſtay his Hand if you are able; or if he be Blind, and in his miſtake be going directly upon the Mouth of a Pit, you muſt diſcover his Danger, and diſſwade him from it, or every Body will deem you Acceſſary to his Death. Theſe are Caſes in which every Body is convinc'd that he

he ought to ſuccour his Friend, yea, his Enemy; and needs no *Caſuiſt* to determin the bounds of his Duty in ſo plain a Matter. And what? ſhall we have more Care about the *Body* of our Brother, than about his *Soul?* And ſhall we be more concern'd to prevent his *Temporal* than his *Eternal Ruin?*

And does not he *whom Satan hath blinded,* need the Direction of thoſe whom God has inlightn'd, as much as he who has loſt his Bodily Sight? And has not that infatuated Soul, whom Luſt and Paſſion hath put out of his right Mind, need to be bound with Chains, and to be rigidly dealt with, as much as any poor diſtracted Creature in *Bedlam?*

It is true, neither of theſe ſorts of mad People will at preſent give you Thanks for your Pains with them, becauſe, during their Lunacy, neither of them have Senſe enough to diſcern, that what you do is for their Good. But you muſt wait the Recovery of their Senſes, and then they will be exceeding

ceeding thankful to you, and bleſs the Time in which they were acquainted with you, and praiſe God who put it into your Heart to do them ſuch a Kindneſs.

And if it ſhall ſo pleaſe God, that by all our Informations, Admonitions and Reproofs, we become inſtrumental to gain but one Soul *from the Power of Satan to God*; it will be an abundant Recompence for all our Labours and Sufferings in it. For then all the Good he does, and all the Glory which he gives to God, will in a great meaſure redound to our Advantage in the other World, which ſhould mightily invigorate our Endeavours of this kind; and if they be but hearty and diligent, they cannot wholly miſcarry.

But there are ſome who frequently make uſe of a proverbial Speech in this Caſe, to hinder the progreſs of this bleſſed Work, tho it be but little to their purpoſe; which is, *That every Veſſel muſt ſtand upon its own bottom.*

And thus far it is true, That every one muſt principally anſwer for his own Sins to God. But it's as true, *That we may be partakers of other Mens Sins*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. And that if we are ſharers in their Guilt by Connivance, or a ſinful Silence and Neglect, we ſhall alſo ſhare in their Puniſhment. Hence it is that we are adviſed, *Rev.* 18. 4. *That we partake not of the Sins of* Babylon, *that we receive not of her Plagues.*

And as to the Caſe of publick and ſcandalous Sins, the whole Community is concern'd to bring the Tranſgreſſor to due Puniſhment: for we are often aſſured in the Book of God, that *there's no other way to put away the Evil from the whole Body of the People*, which is ever liable to the Vengeance of God, where ſuch Enormities are unpuniſhed, *Deut.* 13. 5. *Deut.* 19. 19. and 21. 21. So that we muſt conclude, *That ſuch as frequently hear or behold thoſe Vices and Impieties which the Laws of God and Man condemn, and*

and yet never endeavour to bring them to a juſt Rebuke and Correction, are Sinners againſt God and Men: and next to the principal Acters, theſe Connivers at Sin are the Inſtruments of pulling down the Curſes and Plagues of God upon a Land. For in the Caſe of uncertain Murder, *Deut.* 21. the Elders of the City were to proteſt, That *their Eyes had not ſeen the Fact, as well as that their Hands had not done it.* And, alas! how great are the Dangers of this our *Nation*, by reaſon of this deplorable neglect of doing Juſtice upon publick Wickedneſs. Vice has ſo long been uncontroll'd, that it's now grown Impudent: yea, it has been ſo long encouraged by great Examples, and dandled upon the Knees of ſome Magiſtrates, who ought to have trampled it under their Feet, (and with *Samuel*, to have *hewn it to pieces*, as he did *Agag*, *before the Lord)* that it is grown *Monſtrous*, *Scandalous*, and *Crying*.

And therefore, as you would be found Lovers and Servants of God, and not Fighters againſt him: and as you would avert, and not pull down his Judgments upon your Native Land; I earneſtly entreat you, yea, I charge it upon your Conſciences (as my *Text* impowers me to do) that you ſeriouſly and reſolutely ſet your ſelves from henceforth to a *vigorous Proſecution of all legal Methods of Reformation*, as you would prevent the Judgments of God on Earth, and avoid the Vengeance of his Eternal Wrath.

I ſhall now conclude all with a few *practical Inferences* from the whole.

Infer. 1. We may from what has been ſaid perceive, what a groſs Miſtake the pretended Kindneſs of Compartners in Sin is. If it be *Hatred not to rebuke a Perſon for Sin*, what a fatal Enmity is it to lead him into it, and careſs him in it? The filthy Acquaintance

quaintance of the Adulterers and Adultereſſes, and of all ſinful Companions, is not only Enmity againſt God, but againſt themſelves alſo. They trip up each others Heels, and tumble in each others Arms into the bottomleſs Pit. The *Rebukes* of the Text have infinitely more kindneſs in them, than ſuch treacherous Embraces, tho ſuch abandoned Creatures have not competent Senſe to perceive and value it.

Infer. 2. Since God requires us to *rebuke the Sins of our Companions* in the Text, how difficult ſhall we find it to be innocent in ill Company! 'Tis very uneaſy in ſome Tempers, to reprove a Friend, or a Superior; and 'tis more uneaſy to a tender Conſcience, to omit a proper Seaſon for Reproof. And ſometimes a defect in your Zeal may cauſe you to ſlip the fit Opportunity; and this will be to your wounding, when you reflect upon it with due Seriouſneſs and Tenderneſs:

So

So that you will always find your *Integrity and Peace* beſt preſerved by a careful ſhunning of *vain and looſe Company*, as much as poſſible.

And in truth, this demonſtrates the uſefulneſs of thoſe *Religious Societies*, which are of late erected in this City, which I pray God confirm and increaſe. For it is an invaluable Benefit for *young Men* to know what Converſation is proper for their Intimacy; and where they may join themſelves with thoſe who are going towards Everlaſting Bliſs. The want of ſuch edifying Company (and the Poiſon of the contrary) has been the Ruin of many a hopeful young Man and Woman.

Infer. 3. Laſtly, How ſad a Thought is it, and how ſhould it cut us to the Heart, That there is ſo little Zeal for God in a Nation of *profeſſed Chriſtians*? How unlike are the moſt of thoſe who bear the Name of Chriſt, to him of whom it is ſaid, *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath*

hath eaten me up? Yea, how unlike are we to thoſe *Primitive Chriſtians*, whoſe holy Fervency carried them through the moſt threatning Dangers, whoſe *Religion* ſcattered the groſs Fogs of Profaneneſs and Superſtition with its bright and warm Beams, and made the *Chriſtian Name* Illuſtrious and Honourable in the World?

O Sirs! as we love our Lord and Saviour, let us act ſomething like our Holy Profeſſion, and our infinite Hopes: Let our whole courſe of Life demonſtrate that we are indeed reſolv'd for Heaven: Let our Speeches ſavour of our Holy Faith; and let us continually breathe of God, and the things of his Eternal Kingdom; and let it be ſeen in all Places and Companies, that we cannot bear the appearance of any Contempt of the Great God, and of his Holy Will and Authority.

Truly if ever our *Holy Religion* regains its Primitive Reputation and Renown, it muſt be by the exemplary Purity, Zeal, and Fervour of its Profeſſors;

feſſors; even by a general, vigorous, and reſolute Oppoſition to *Vice*, and a zealous and conſcientious Practice of all *Chriſtian Duty*. To which Holy Frame, I beſeech God to raiſe every Soul of us, that we may not only *eſcape the Pollutions of this World* our ſelves, but be a means of *pulling others out of the Mire* of Sin here, and of ſaving them from the eternal Vengeance of God, which will otherwiſe be their Portion for ever.

Conſider what has been ſaid, and the Lord give you Underſtanding in all Things. Amen.

FINIS.